

REMARKS

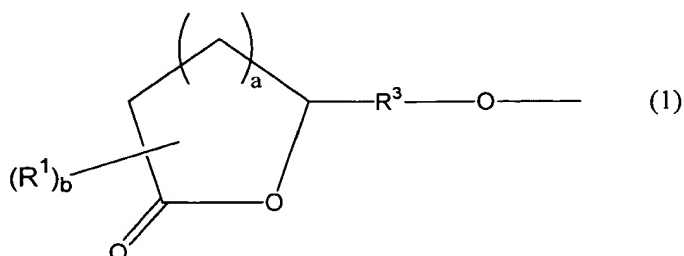
In the Official Action, Claims 2-10 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims (page 5, paragraph 8 of the Official Action). The Applicant's gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter.

Independent Claims 2 and 5 have been amended and are now in independent form. It is respectfully submitted that Claims 2 and 5 as amended are patentable over the references cited in the Official Action. In particular, none of the cited references teach or reasonably suggest a radiation-sensitive resin composition comprising a resin as set forth in Claims 2 or 5. Similarly, Claims 3, 4 and 6-10, which depend directly from either Claim 2 or Claim 5, are also patentable over the references cited in the Official Action for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 2 or Claim 5. Withdrawal of the objection Claims 2-10 is therefore respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 11, 12, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,968,713 to Nozaki, et al. This rejection appears on page 2, paragraph 2 of the Official Action. Claims 1, 11-14, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,420,082 to Sato, et al. This rejection appears on page 3, paragraph 3 of the Official Action. Claims 1 and 11-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,251,560 to Wallow, et al. This rejection appears on page 4, paragraph 4 of the Official Action. Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Sato, et al. in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,265,131 to Chang, et al.

It is respectfully submitted that each of the above rejections have been obviated. In particular, Claim 1 as amended recites "[a] radiation-sensitive resin composition comprising: (A)

an acid-dissociable group-containing resin which is insoluble or scarcely soluble in alkali and becomes alkali soluble when the acid-dissociable group dissociates, the resin comprising a lactone cyclic structure of the following formula (1),



wherein a is an integer from 1-3, b is an integer from 0-9, R^3 represents a linear or branched divalent hydrocarbon group of which the main chain has 1-5 carbon atoms, and R^1 represents a monovalent organic group, and (B) a photoacid generator.” None of the cited references teach or reasonably suggest a resin composition as set forth in Claim 1. Further, each of Claims 11-16 depends from Claim 1 and is therefore patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claim 1. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

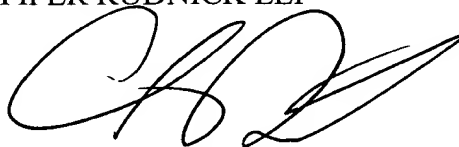
Claims 17, 18 and 19 depend from Claims 1, 2 and 5, respectively. These claims are therefore also patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to Claims 1, 2 and 5.

CONCLUSION

All rejections having been addressed by the present amendments and response, Applicants believe that the present case is in condition for allowance and respectfully request early notice to that effect. If any issues remain to be addressed in this matter which might be resolved by discussion, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicants' undersigned counsel at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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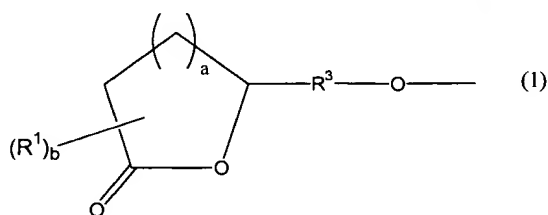
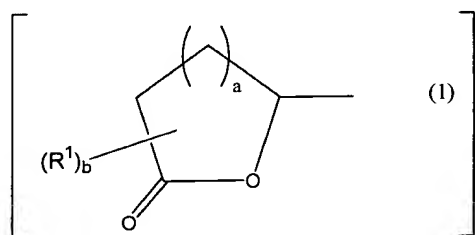
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MARKED-UP COPY OF AMENDED CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A radiation-sensitive resin composition comprising:

(A) an acid-dissociable group-containing resin which is insoluble or scarcely soluble in alkali and becomes alkali soluble when the acid-dissociable group dissociates, the resin comprising a lactone cyclic structure of the following formula (1),



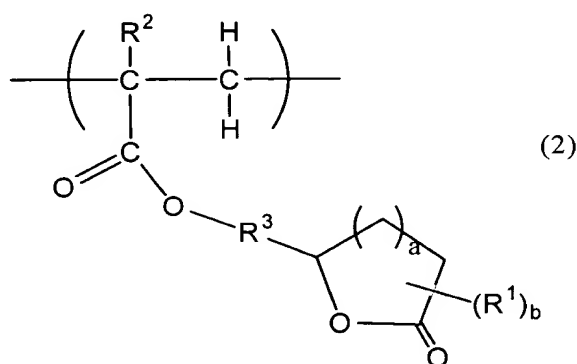
wherein a is an integer from 1-3, b is an integer from 0-9, R^3 represents a linear or branched divalent hydrocarbon group of which the main chain has 1-5 carbon atoms, and R^1 represents a monovalent organic group, and

(B) a photoacid generator.

2. (Amended) [The] A radiation sensitive resin composition [according to claim 1,]

comprising:

[wherein the resin of component (A) comprises] (A) an acid-dissociable group-containing resin which is insoluble or scarcely soluble in alkali and becomes alkali soluble when the acid-dissociable group dissociates, the resin comprising a recurring unit of the following formula (2) [and at least one other recurring unit having an alicyclic hydrocarbon skeleton in the main chain and/or side chain,]



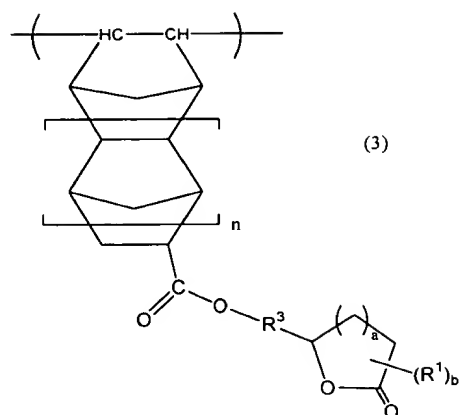
wherein a is an integer from 1 to 3, b is an integer from 0 to 9, R¹ represents a monovalent organic group, R² represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl group, and R³ represents a linear or branched divalent hydrocarbon group of which the main chain has 1-5 carbon atoms; and

(B) a photoacid generator.

5. (Amended) [The] A radiation sensitive resin composition [according to claim 1,]

comprising:

[wherein the resin of component (A) comprises] (A) an acid-dissociable group-containing resin which is insoluble or scarcely soluble in alkali and becomes alkali soluble when the acid-dissociable group dissociates, the resin comprising a recurring unit of the following formula (3) [and at least one other recurring unit having an alicyclic hydrocarbon skeleton in the main chain and/or side chain]:



wherein a is an integer from 1 to 3, b is an integer from 0 to 9, n is an integer from 0 to 2, R^1 represents a monovalent organic group, and R^3 represents a linear or branched divalent hydrocarbon group of which the main chain has 1-5 carbon atoms; and

(B) a photoacid generator.